

MEMORANDUM**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Office of Educational
Research and Improvement

National Center for Education Statistics

October 28, 1999

TO: NCES Taskforce for IPEDS Redesign:
Samuel S. Peng (Chair)
Roslyn A. Korb
Joseph Rose
Thomas D. Snyder
Michael P. Cohen

FROM: Gary W. Phillips
Acting Commissioner

SUBJECT: Recommendations for the Redesign of the Integrated Postsecondary
Education Data System (IPEDS)

The final report for the redesign of IPEDS makes a compelling argument for extensive changes in the operations and substance of this data system. The implementation schedule was designed to allow NCES to meet its external mandates and provide institutions with sufficient time to make necessary modifications to their reporting systems. In addition, training was emphasized to facilitate high quality reporting and limiting respondent burden.

The substantial involvement of the postsecondary community in all facets of the redesign process is evident throughout the report. This indicates that the major proposition of the report, that it is necessary to make all specified changes rather than selecting among them, is not only creditable but viable as well. From my perspective, the report is cogent and persuasive and I believe that once the recommendations are fully implemented, NCES will have a user-friendly, timely data base in postsecondary education. As a result, I am pleased to accept both the report and its recommendations.

As the report notes, however, implementing the recommendations on the suggested schedule will require additional resources. To the extent that NCES can obtain these additional resources, they will be made available to the IPEDS redesign. If additional resources are not forthcoming, it is clear to me that the changes recommended in this redesign report will still need to be implemented, with a reduced scope including fewer web-based collections and fewer data elements.

Finally, please accept my thanks for a job well-done.